

[0491] 1. A method to audit, comply and maintain on-going regulatory compliance at one or more U.S. commercial or retail regulated entities, with all applicable regulatory requirements, promulgated by at least one state or federal regulatory agency and ascertainable from published state or federal codes of regulations, including general, but not site specific permit requirements, via an intranet or the WWW, and comprising:

[0492] means for identifying regulatory agency(ies) regulating the regulated entity based upon information provided by a facility employee or contractor;

[0493] means for accessing appropriate state and federal government WWW web sites and databases containing state and federal regulations;

[0494] means for identifying specific regulations and regulatory requirements applicable to different regulated entities;

[0495] means for organizing applicable regulatory requirements into separate electronic checklist documents, (which might sometimes be referred to as C-Records") each addressing one or more primary regulatory requirements, and each of which may be completed by a single employee or contractor;

[0496] means for formatting electronic checklist documents to include one or more detailed requirements, specific to each primary requirement each of which detailed requirements must be complied with, in order for a regulated entity to be in compliance with a primary requirement;

[0497] means for incorporating an electronic link within each electronic checklist document providing access to additional information needed to help a employee or contractor to better understand the primary and detailed regulatory requirements addressed by each electronic checklist document;

[0498] means for incorporating an electronic link within each electronic checklist document providing access to a copy of the text of regulatory requirements addressed by each electronic checklist document;

[0499] means for incorporating an electronic link within each electronic checklist document providing access to a quiz or a test on the regulatory requirements addressed in each electronic checklist document;

[0500] means for revising facility profiles to reflect changes in the construction and/or operation of the regulated entity resulting in new compliance requirements

[0501] and means for automatically electronically notifying all responsible employees or contractors to confirm compliance with new requirements.

[0502] means for creating a single document for each employee and contractor position (that might sometimes be referred to as an “Audit Clipboard”) which may contain links to all electronic checklist documents to be completed by the individual working at the position;

[0503] means for creating a single document for each employee and contractor position (that might sometimes be referred to as an “Compliance Clipboard”) which may contain links to all electronic checklist documents to be completed by the individual working at the position;

[0504] means for prompting a regulated entity employee or contractor to identify a specified facility type;

[0505] means for prompting a regulated entity employee or contractor to identify the city, town, county (or parish) and state in which the facility operates;

[0506] means for prompting a regulated entity employee or contractor to complete an electronic checklist providing more detailed information on entity

operations as needed to identify all specific regulated activities undertaken by the regulated entity;

[0507] means for storing electronic checklist documents within a facility database residing on a server maintained by a service provider;

[0508] means for prompting a regulated entity employee or contractor to assign audit and compliance responsibilities to various employees or contractors, and direct employees and contractors to audit, comply and confirm compliance by completing assigned electronic checklist documents;

[0509] means for prompting various responsible employees and contractors at a regulated entity to access assigned electronic checklist documents, and read additional information about regulatory requirements linked to each electronic checklist document;

[0510] means for prompting various responsible employees and contractors at a facility to access assigned electronic checklist documents, and view the actual text of regulatory requirements linked to each electronic checklist document;

[0511] means for prompting various responsible employees and contractors at a facility to access electronic checklist documents, and take a test to confirm understanding of regulatory requirements linked to each electronic checklist document;

[0512] means for scoring, storing and displaying test results;

[0513] means for requiring a regulated entity employee or contractor to receive a pre-established test score before being permitted to complete and submit an electronic checklist document;

[0514] means for prompting employees and contractors to audit facility compliance with primary requirements and detailed requirements by accessing and checking appropriate locations in each assigned electronic checklist document;

[0515] means for identifying employees and contractors that have timely completed and submitted all electronic checklist audit documents;

[0516] means for identifying employees and contractors that have failed to timely complete and submit one or more electronic checklist audit documents;

[0517] means for identifying employees and contractors failing to confirm compliance with one or more primary requirements when submitting an electronic checklist audit document;

[0518] means for storing and displaying regulated entity audit results;

[0519] means for allowing an authorized employee or contractor to view regulated entity audit results via an intranet or the WWW;

[0520] means for prompting employees and contractors at each regulated entity to access, and confirm on-going facility compliance with primary requirements and detailed requirements by checking appropriate places in each assigned electronic checklist document and submit same to the regulated entity database;

[0521] means for identifying employees and contractors that have timely completed and submitted all electronic checklist on-going compliance documents;

[0522] means for identifying employees and contractors that have failed to timely complete and submit one or more electronic checklist compliance documents;

[0523] means for identifying employees and contractors failing to confirm compliance with one or more primary requirements when submitting an electronic checklist compliance document;

[0524] means for storing and displaying facility compliance results;

[0525] means for allowing an authorized employee or contractor(s) to view facility compliance results via an intranet or the WWW;

[0526] 2. The method of claim 1 where the regulated entity type is selected from a list, comprising: automobile dealerships; heating, ventilating and air conditioning contractors; chiropractor, physician and dental offices; hospitals; motor vehicle paint and body shops; motor vehicle air conditioning shops; motor vehicle tire shops; dry cleaners; nursing homes; passenger airports; cargo airports; private airports; animal hospitals; banks; funeral homes; motorcycle dealers; recreational vehicle dealers; painting contractors; pest control contractors; gasoline stations; convenience stores; private and municipal motor vehicle repair and maintenance shops; radiator repair shops; brake repair shops, muffler and exhaust shops; oil and motor vehicle oil and lubrication shops; motor vehicle windshield repair shops; restaurants; fast food establishments; hotels; motels; private and local, state and federal office buildings; private and municipal drinking water treatment plants, private and municipal wastewater treatment plants.

[0527] 3. The method of claim 1 wherein the regulatory requirements applicable to the regulated entity derive from regulations promulgated by a federal regulatory agency and published in the U.S. Code of Federal Regulations.

[0528] 4. The method of claim 1 wherein the regulatory requirements applicable to a regulated entity derive from regulations promulgated by a state regulatory agency and published in an appropriate state administrative code.

[0529] 5. A method to audit, comply and maintain on-going compliance with regulated entity policy requirements, established by regulated entity management at retail and commercial regulated entities, via an intranet or the WWW, comprising:

[0530] means for identifying specific policy requirements applicable to different regulated entities;

[0531] means for organizing applicable requirements into separate electronic checklist documents, (which might sometimes be referred to as C-Records") each addressing one or more primary regulatory requirements, and each of which may be completed by a single employee or contractor;

[0532] means for formatting electronic checklist documents to include one or more detailed requirements, specific to each primary requirement each of which detailed requirements must be complied with, in order for a regulated entity to be in compliance with a primary requirement;

[0533] means for incorporating an electronic link within each electronic checklist document providing access to additional information needed to help a employee or contractor to better understand the primary and detailed applicable policy requirements addressed by each electronic checklist document;

[0534] means for incorporating an electronic link within each electronic checklist document providing access to a copy of the text of applicable policy requirements addressed by each electronic checklist document;

[0535] means for incorporating an electronic link within each electronic checklist document providing access to a quiz or a test on applicable policy requirements addressed in each electronic checklist document;

[0536] means for revising facility profiles to reflect changes in the construction and/or operation of the regulated entity resulting in new compliance requirements and means for automatically electronically notifying all responsible employees or contractors to confirm compliance with new requirements.

[0537] means for creating a single document for each employee and contractor position (that might sometimes be referred to as an “Audit Clipboard”) which may contain links to all electronic checklist documents to be completed by the individual working at the position;

[0538] means for creating a single document for each employee and contractor position (that might sometimes be referred to as an “Compliance Clipboard”) which may contain links to all electronic checklist documents to be completed by the individual working at the position;

[0539] means for prompting a regulated entity employee or contractor to identify a specified facility type;

[0540] means for prompting a regulated entity employee or contractor to identify the city, town, county (or parish) and state in which the facility operates;

[0541] means for prompting a regulated entity employee or contractor to complete an electronic checklist providing more detailed information on entity operations as needed to identify all specific regulated activities undertaken by the regulated entity;

[0542] means for storing electronic checklist documents within a facility database residing on a server maintained by a service provider;

[0543] means for prompting a regulated entity employee or contractor to assign audit and compliance responsibilities to various employees or contractors, and direct employees and contractors to audit, comply and confirm compliance by completing assigned electronic checklist documents;

[0544] means for prompting various responsible employees and contractors at a regulated entity to access assigned electronic checklist documents, and read additional information about policy requirements linked to each electronic checklist document;

[0545] means for prompting various responsible employees and contractors at a facility to access assigned electronic checklist documents, and view the actual text of policy requirements linked to each electronic checklist document;

[0546] means for prompting various responsible employees and contractors at a facility to access electronic checklist documents, and take a test to confirm understanding of policy requirements linked to each electronic checklist document;

[0547] means for scoring, storing and displaying test results;

[0548] means for requiring a regulated entity employee or contractor to receive a pre-established test score before being permitted to complete and submit an electronic checklist document;

[0549] means for prompting employees and contractors to audit facility compliance with primary requirements and detailed requirements by accessing

and checking appropriate locations in each assigned electronic checklist document;

[0550] means for identifying employees and contractors that have timely completed and submitted all electronic checklist audit documents;

[0551] means for identifying employees and contractors that have failed to timely complete and submit one or more electronic checklist audit documents;

[0552] means for identifying employees and contractors failing to confirm compliance with one or more primary requirements when submitting an electronic checklist audit document;

[0553] means for storing and displaying regulated entity audit results;

[0554] means for allowing an authorized employee or contractor to view regulated entity audit results via an intranet or the WWW;

[0555] means for prompting employees and contractors at each regulated entity to access, and confirm on-going facility compliance with primary requirements and detailed requirements by checking appropriate places in each assigned electronic checklist document and submit same to the regulated entity database;

[0556] means for identifying employees and contractors that have timely completed and submitted all electronic checklist on-going compliance documents;

[0557] means for identifying employees and contractors that have failed to timely complete and submit one or more electronic checklist compliance documents;

[0558] means for identifying employees and contractors failing to confirm compliance with one or more primary requirements when submitting an electronic checklist compliance document;

[0559] means for storing and displaying facility compliance results;

[0560] means for allowing an authorized employee or contractor(s) to view facility compliance results via an intranet or the WWW;

[0561] 6. The method of claim 5 where the regulated entity type is selected from a list, comprising: automobile dealerships; heating, ventilating and air conditioning contractors; chiropractor, physician and dental offices; hospitals; motor vehicle paint and body shops; motor vehicle air conditioning shops; motor vehicle tire shops; dry cleaners; nursing homes; passenger airports; cargo airports; private airports; animal hospitals; banks; funeral homes; motorcycle dealers; recreational vehicle dealers; painting contractors; pest control contractors; gasoline stations; convenience stores; private and municipal motor vehicle repair and maintenance shops; radiator repair shops; brake repair shops, muffler and exhaust shops; oil and motor vehicle oil and lubrication shops; motor vehicle windshield repair shops; restaurants; fast food establishments; hotels; motels; private and local, state and federal office buildings; private and municipal drinking water treatment plants, private and municipal wastewater treatment plants.

[0562] 7. A method to audit, comply and maintain on-going compliance with regulated entity policy requirements, established by regulated entity management at retail and commercial regulated entities, via an intranet or the WWW, comprising:

[0563] means for identifying specific franchise agreement requirements applicable to different regulated entities;

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[0564] means for organizing applicable franchise agreement requirements into separate electronic checklist documents, (which might sometimes be referred to as C-Records”) each addressing one or more primary regulatory requirements, and each of which may be completed by a single employee or contractor;

[0565] means for formatting electronic checklist documents to include one or more detailed requirements, specific to each primary requirement each of which detailed requirements must be complied with, in order for a regulated entity to be in compliance with a primary requirement;

[0566] means for incorporating an electronic link within each electronic checklist document providing access to additional information needed to help a employee or contractor to better understand the primary and detailed regulatory requirements addressed by each electronic checklist document;

[0567] means for incorporating an electronic link within each electronic checklist document providing access to a copy of the text of applicable requirements addressed by each electronic checklist document;

[0568] means for incorporating an electronic link within each electronic checklist document providing access to a quiz or a test on the applicable requirements addressed in each electronic checklist document;

[0569] means for revising facility profiles to reflect changes in the construction and/or operation of the regulated entity resulting in new compliance requirements and means for automatically electronically notifying all responsible employees or contractors to confirm compliance with new requirements.

[0570] means for creating a single document for each employee and contractor position (that might sometimes be referred to as an “Audit Clipboard”) which may

contain links to all electronic checklist documents to be completed by the individual working at the position;

[0571] means for creating a single document for each employee and contractor position (that might sometimes be referred to as an “Compliance Clipboard”) which may contain links to all electronic checklist documents to be completed by the individual working at the position;

[0572] means for prompting a regulated entity employee or contractor to identify a specified facility type;

[0573] means for prompting a regulated entity employee or contractor to identify the city, town, county (or parish) and state in which the facility operates;

[0574] means for prompting a regulated entity employee or contractor to complete an electronic checklist providing more detailed information on entity operations as needed to identify all specific regulated activities undertaken by the regulated entity;

[0575] means for storing electronic checklist documents within a facility database residing on a server maintained by a service provider;

[0576] means for prompting a regulated entity employee or contractor to assign audit and compliance responsibilities to various employees or contractors, and direct employees and contractors to audit, comply and confirm compliance by completing assigned electronic checklist documents;

[0577] means for prompting various responsible employees and contractors at a regulated entity to access assigned electronic checklist documents, and read additional information about franchise agreement requirements linked to each electronic checklist document;

[0578] means for prompting various responsible employees and contractors at a facility to access assigned electronic checklist documents, and view the actual text of franchise agreement requirements linked to each electronic checklist document;

[0579] means for prompting various responsible employees and contractors at a facility to access electronic checklist documents, and take a test to confirm understanding of franchise agreement requirements linked to each electronic checklist document;

[0580] means for scoring, storing and displaying test results;

[0581] means for requiring a regulated entity employee or contractor to receive a pre-established test score before being permitted to complete and submit an electronic checklist document;

[0582] means for prompting employees and contractors to audit facility compliance with primary requirements and detailed requirements by accessing and checking appropriate locations in each assigned electronic checklist document;

[0583] means for identifying employees and contractors that have timely completed and submitted all electronic checklist audit documents;

[0584] means for identifying employees and contractors that have failed to timely complete and submit one or more electronic checklist audit documents;

[0585] means for identifying employees and contractors failing to confirm compliance with one or more primary requirements when submitting an electronic checklist audit document;

[0586] means for storing and displaying regulated entity audit results;

[0587] means for allowing an authorized employee or contractor to view regulated entity audit results via an intranet or the WWW;

[0588] means for prompting employees and contractors at each regulated entity to access, and confirm on-going facility compliance with primary requirements and detailed requirements by checking appropriate places in each assigned electronic checklist document and submit same to the regulated entity database;

[0589] means for identifying employees and contractors that have timely completed and submitted all electronic checklist on-going compliance documents;

[0590] means for identifying employees and contractors that have failed to timely complete and submit one or more electronic checklist compliance documents;

[0591] means for identifying employees and contractors failing to confirm compliance with one or more primary requirements when submitting an electronic checklist compliance document;

[0592] means for storing and displaying facility compliance results;

[0593] means for allowing an authorized employee or contractor(s) to view facility compliance results via an intranet or the WWW;

[0594] 8. The method of claim 7 where the regulated entity type is selected from a list, comprising: automobile dealerships; heating, ventilating and air conditioning contractors; chiropractor, physician and dental offices; hospitals; motor vehicle paint and body shops; motor vehicle air conditioning shops; motor

vehicle tire shops; dry cleaners; nursing homes; passenger airports; cargo airports; private airports; animal hospitals; banks; funeral homes; motorcycle dealers; recreational vehicle dealers; painting contractors; pest control contractors; gasoline stations; convenience stores; private and municipal motor vehicle repair and maintenance shops; radiator repair shops; brake repair shops, muffler and exhaust shops; oil and motor vehicle oil and lubrication shops; motor vehicle windshield repair shops; restaurants; fast food establishments; hotels; motels; private and local, state and federal office buildings; private and municipal drinking water treatment plants, private and municipal wastewater treatment plants.

[0491] 9. A method for allowing a U.S regulatory agency to audit and confirm on-going compliance at one or more retail, commercial, industrial, or manufacturing facilities of all types, with all applicable regulatory requirements, promulgated or issued by at least one state or federal regulatory agency, including any and all site specific permit requirements and approvals, via an intranet or the WWW, and comprising:

[0492] means for identifying regulated facilities based upon information provided by a facility employee or contractor;

[0493] means for accessing appropriate state and federal government WWW web sites and databases containing state and federal regulations applicable to the facility;

[0494] means for identifying any additional site specific approval and any other agency requirements applicable to different regulated facilities;

[0495] means for organizing applicable regulatory requirements into separate electronic checklist documents, (which might sometimes be referred to as C-Records") each addressing one or more primary regulatory requirements, and

each of which may be completed by a single employee or contractor with regulatory compliance responsibilities at a regulated facility;

[0496] means for formatting electronic checklist documents to include one or more detailed requirements, specific to each primary requirement each of which detailed requirements must be complied with, in order for a regulated entity to be in compliance with a primary requirement;

[0497] means for incorporating an electronic link within each electronic checklist document providing access to additional information needed to help a employee or contractor to better understand the primary and detailed regulatory requirements addressed by each electronic checklist document;

[0498] means for incorporating an electronic link within each electronic checklist document providing access to a copy of the text of regulatory requirements addressed by each electronic checklist document;

[0499] means for incorporating an electronic link within each electronic checklist document providing access to a quiz or a test on the regulatory requirements addressed in each electronic checklist document;

[0500] means for revising facility profiles to reflect changes in the construction and/or operation of the regulated entity resulting in new compliance requirements [0501] and means for automatically electronically notifying all responsible employees or contractors to confirm compliance with new requirements.

[0502] means for creating a single document for each employee and contractor position (that might sometimes be referred to as an "Audit Clipboard") which may contain links to all electronic checklist documents to be completed by the individual working at the position;

[0503] means for creating a single document for each employee and contractor position (that might sometimes be referred to as an “Compliance Clipboard”) which may contain links to all electronic checklist documents to be completed by the individual working at the position;

[0504] means for prompting a facility employee or contractor to identify a specified facility type;

[0505] means for prompting a facility employee or contractor to identify the city, town, county (or parish) and state in which the facility operates;

[0506] means for prompting a facility employee or contractor to complete an electronic checklist providing more detailed information on entity operations as needed to identify all specific regulated activities undertaken by the facility;

[0507] means for storing electronic checklist documents within a facility database residing on a server maintained by a service provider;

[0508] means for prompting a regulated entity employee or contractor to assign audit and compliance responsibilities to various employees or contractors, and direct employees and contractors to audit, comply and confirm compliance by completing assigned electronic checklist documents;

[0509] means for prompting various responsible employees and contractors at a regulated facility to access assigned electronic checklist documents, and read additional information about regulatory requirements linked to each electronic checklist document;

[0510] means for prompting various responsible employees and contractors at a regulated facility to access assigned electronic checklist documents, and view

the actual text of regulatory requirements linked to each electronic checklist document;

[0511] means for prompting various responsible employees and contractors at a regulated facility to access electronic checklist documents, and take a test to confirm understanding of regulatory requirements linked to each electronic checklist document;

[0512] means for scoring, storing and displaying test results;

[0513] means for requiring a regulated facility employee or contractor to receive a pre-established test score before being permitted to complete and submit an electronic checklist document;

[0514] means for prompting employees and contractors to audit facility compliance with primary requirements and detailed requirements by accessing and checking appropriate locations in each assigned electronic checklist document;

[0515] means for identifying employees and contractors that have timely completed and submitted all electronic checklist audit documents;

[0516] means for identifying employees and contractors that have failed to timely complete and submit one or more electronic checklist audit documents;

[0517] means for identifying employees and contractors failing to confirm compliance with one or more primary requirements when submitting an electronic checklist audit document;

[0518] means for storing and displaying regulated entity audit results;

[0519] means for allowing an authorized agency employee or representative to view regulated facility audit results via an intranet or the WWW;

[0520] means for prompting employees and contractors at each regulated facility to access, and confirm on-going facility compliance with primary requirements and detailed requirements by checking appropriate places in each assigned electronic checklist document and submit same to the facility database;

[0521] means for identifying employees and contractors that have timely completed and submitted all electronic checklist on-going compliance documents;

[0522] means for identifying employees and contractors that have failed to timely complete and submit one or more electronic checklist compliance documents;

[0523] means for identifying employees and contractors failing to confirm compliance with one or more primary requirements when submitting an electronic checklist compliance document;

[0524] means for storing and displaying facility compliance results;

[0525] means for allowing an authorized agency employee or representative to view facility compliance results via an intranet or the WWW;

[0526] 10. The method of claim 9 where the regulated entity type is selected from a list of all facilities and business types assigned a Standard Industrial Classification Code number by the U.S. government.

[0527] 11. The method of claim 9 wherein the regulatory requirements applicable to the regulated entity derive from regulations promulgated by a federal regulatory agency and published in the U.S. Code of Federal Regulations.

[0528] 12. The method of claim 9 wherein the regulatory requirements applicable to a regulated entity derive from regulations promulgated by a state regulatory agency and published in an appropriate state administrative code.

VI. ABSTRACT:

A comprehensive WWW based system for identifying requirements applicable to certain specified types of retail and commercial facilities conducting certain specified types of activities regulated by various regulatory agencies and managing compliance thereafter via the WWW. Applicable requirements are first identified from entity records and state and federal government web sites, and incorporated into electronic "C-Records". Managers of regulated entities better define regulated activities by completing a "facility profile" to more closely define facility operation and selected C-Records are downloaded and assigned to different employees and contractors for completion. Employees or contractors access C-Records via intranet or the WWW, initially audit for compliance with applicable requirements and periodically confirm on-going compliance thereafter. Managers may revise facility profiles to reflect changes, which signals need to complete additional C-Records. Authorized users may monitor compliance by any employee or contractor, at any facility, or for all facilities, via the WWW.

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